

# Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA  
DEPARTMENT OF LAW  
12 75 W. WASHINGTON STREET  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926  
[WWW.AZAG.GOV](http://WWW.AZAG.GOV)

ANDREA M. ESQUER  
PRESS SECRETARY  
PHONE: (602) 542-8019  
CELL PHONE: (602) 725-2200

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Three Plead Guilty in Home Repair Fraud**

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Feb. 28, 2006) Attorney General Terry Goddard announced today a plea agreement with three defendants in a home repair fraud ring. The three defrauded an elderly Tucson woman of \$11,000 by falsely promising to repair the roof of her home.

Gary Miller of Illinois and Gary Mitchell of Ohio pleaded guilty today to financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult. The third defendant, Sheila Miller, 30, of Illinois pleaded guilty earlier this month to solicitation to commit theft by control. The pleas follow indictments by a Pima County Grand Jury in 2005.

According to the indictment, the three defendants in January 2004 approached an elderly Tucson woman who suffered from dementia and told her they noticed that her roof needed to be repaired. They offered to do the job for \$2,600. The woman agreed and gave them a check, but the roof repair was never done. The defendants returned to her home on other occasions and asked for additional checks.

This happened five different times because the victim did not remember the defendants from the previous visits. When Gary Miller tried to cash the last check for \$2,600, the bank teller became suspicious and notified police.

The three defendants are known to authorities as part of a "gypsy family" from the Midwest. They visit Arizona during the winter months and prey on the elderly, taking money for home repairs that are never done.

The three defendants each face up to 3.75 years in prison. They are scheduled to be sentenced on April 24, 2006, by Judge Howard Fell. Assistant Attorney General Paul Eckerstrom prosecuted this case.

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